

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Thursday, September 19, 1985 A-3

Playboy's 'Playmate' Fills Courtroom at Fraud Trial

By Charles Memminger
Star-Bulletin Writer

There was not an empty seat in the courtroom and people stood against the walls yesterday to get a look at the Playboy centerfold who testified in the Ronald Rewald fraud trial.

"The court notes that Miss Brooks' testimony outdrew Jack Lord," U.S. Judge Harold Fong said with a smile as Cynthia Brooks left the stand yesterday. TV star Jack Lord also had filled the courtroom seats when he testified last week but did not have as many people standing against the walls.

Brooks' testimony, however, was not as exciting as the build-up.

The blonde model had caused some controversy last week when she failed to show up for Rewald's trial. Fong, at the urging of prosecutors, was preparing to order Brooks' arrest in California by U.S. marshals. But Brooks' attorney assured the court that she would come in voluntarily.

Brooks testified that she received \$3,000 from Rewald in 1982 after her separation from her husband. But she also invested some \$18,000 of her own money in Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong.

SHE CURRENTLY is involved in a dispute with the bankruptcy trustee over just how much money she had in her account when the company collapsed in 1983. The trustee also is trying to collect \$3,000 from Brooks that she withdrew less than 90 days before the collapse.

Brooks, who now lives in Los Angeles, was "Miss April" in Playboy magazine.

She met Rewald in 1981 at the polo fields, where she had a job exercising polo ponies, Brooks said. For the next several months, Rewald tried to persuade her to invest in his company.

He also tried to give her money. She refused to take money from Rewald, Brooks said, because "it scared me."

Eventually, she did open an account with Rewald, first putting in \$5,000.

When she decided to divorce her husband, Rewald paid her \$3,000 so she could move out on her own and also said he would "take care" of paying for the divorce.

She found out after the company's collapse that Rewald actually had taken money out of her account to pay for attorneys' fees.

Brooks denied that she had a close social relationship with Rewald. She said she had lunch with him on one occasion.